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Recognizing the Contributions of Navy Medical Research Efforts

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By Cmdr. Rita Simmons, Executive Officer, Navy Medical Research Unit-Dayton

As the Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory (NAMRL) closes the book on its 70-plus year history in Pensacola, the laboratory's scientific resurgence and push to maintain mission execution during a tumultuous period of reorganization and relocation to Ohio to become part of Navy Medical Research Unit-Dayton continues to be widely recognized. Fittingly, in June 2011 NAMRL was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation (MUC) by the Secretary of the Navy for consistently demonstrating meritorious achievements above and beyond mission requirements from 1 April 2007 to 1 April 2010. The MUC is awarded to units whose accomplishments and achievements set it apart from other units performing similar services and is comparable to the individual Bronze Star award.

NAMRL distinguished itself by executing and delivering award winning products to the fleet and maintaining high levels of research quality and productivity during the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) relocation from NAS Pensacola, FL to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH. While many units facing BRAC intentionally scale down work volume or cease operations entirely, NAMRL improved scientific productivity by eight-fold, significantly increased sponsorship and research funding, and transitioned five innovative scientific products to the Fleet. In addition to setting itself apart through excellence in research and development, NAMRL personnel prepared for the BRAC transition, managing the complex logistics associated with physically moving the laboratory over 750 miles. NAMRL personnel and leadership successfully oversaw the design and construction of a $13 million MILCON (military construction) and assumed the role of technical lead for the

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design-build of two novel research devices, one of which was a $19 million, one-of-a-kind Disorientation Research Device that will be a cornerstone of Navy Medicine's aeromedical research program.

Although one of the smallest laboratories in the NMR&D Enterprise, NAMRL was recognized by several federal, national, and international organizations for producing outstanding research, with six awards bestowed, including two Federal Laboratory Consortium awards for Technology Transfer, the only laboratory in the Enterprise to ever receive this honor.

NAMRL leadership instilled a culture of service, resulting in a heightened commitment to its mission to directly impact warfighter readiness and Fleet survivability with relevant operational products. The award is a testament to the distinctive accomplishments, unrelenting perseverance, and unfailing devotion to duty displayed by the officers and staff of NAMRL, and represents the culture of excellence that will continue at Naval Medical Research Unit-Dayton.

This article originally appeared as part of the DoDLive Medical Monday series and can be found here

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